

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting
Monday, November 26, 2007**

1. CONVENE: 7:04 p.m.
2. FLAG SALUTE: Member Lynch.
3. ROLL CALL: President Cook, Vice President Kohlstrand, Board Members Ezzy Ashcraft, Cunningham, Lynch, Mariani and McNamara.

Also present were Planning Services Manager Andrew Thomas, Assistant City Attorney Farimah Faiz.

4. MINUTES:
 - a. Minutes for the meeting of September 24, 2007.

Member Cunningham noted that although he was not in attendance at the meeting, he had noticed that the attached resolution stated that he voted “Aye” as well as being absent. He noted that the vote in the minutes was correct.

President Cook noted that page 4, paragraph 2, should be changed to read, “President Cook noted that the *siting* ~~siding~~ of the buildings were originally set in place because the City wanted to retain the warehouse structures. She inquired whether the Planning Board would have the ability to review the two westernmost new buildings and reconsider their *location* ~~siding~~.”

President Cook noted that the spelling of the speaker on page 5, paragraph 5, should be changed to Karen *Bey* ~~Bay~~.”

Vice President Kohlstrand moved to approve the minutes of September 24, 2007, as amended.

Member Mariani seconded the motion, with the following voice vote – 6. Abstain: 1 (Cunningham). The motion passed.

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION: None.
6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:
 - a. Future Agendas

Mr. Thomas provided an update on future agenda items.

b. Zoning Administrator Report

Mr. Thomas provided the Zoning Administrator report.

c. Miscellaneous

Member Cunningham noted that he had received an acknowledgement of six years of tenure on the Planning Board from the APA.

President Cook noted that she had received APA communications addressed to former President John Piziali.

Mr. Thomas noted that he would update the Board membership information.

Vice President Kohlstrand inquired about the status of the parking study, which she believed would be presented by the end of the year. Mr. Thomas noted that there had been concerns about the work, much of which had to be redone. He believed that it was close to being ready, perhaps by January or February 2008. He added that the Economic Development Strategic Plan would be presented in December.

In response to an inquiry by President Cook regarding the status of the Paru Street subdivision, Mr. Thomas replied that was still in process.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATION: None.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR:

8-A **2008 Meeting Calendar.**

Member McNamara inquired whether a meeting would be held on Columbus Day (October 13).

President Cook recalled that the Columbus Day meeting had been moved for 2007. Mr. Thomas noted that he would confirm that date.

Member McNamara noted that the meetings scheduled for November 24 and December 22 occurred during the Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks.

President Cook believed that there was typically one meeting held during December.

The Planning Board concurred that the December 22 meeting would be cancelled.

Vice President Kohlstrand suggested that the meeting the week of Thanksgiving be retained, and that it be reconsidered if the agenda was a light one.

Member Lynch inquired why the meeting was noticed from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. President Cook believed it was noticed as such to avoid additional motions to extend the meeting.

Mr. Thomas confirmed that staff would check on the October 13 meeting and report back to the Board.

Member Cunningham moved to approve the 2008 Meeting Calendar as amended, including the cancellation of the December 22 meeting.

Member McNamara seconded the motion, with the following voice vote – 7. The motion passed.

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

9-A. DP07-0003 – Alameda Landing Mixed Use Development Project – Applicant: Catellus Development Group, a ProLogis Company. The applicant requests an amendment to a Design Review approval for a retail center and associated improvements located south of Mitchell Avenue Extension and east of Fifth Street Extension. The site is located along the eastern end of the former FISC Site (Tract 7884) within the M-X Mixed Use Planned Development Zoning District (AT/DV).

Mr. Thomas presented the staff report, and described the background and scope of the proposed project, including the conditions required by the Planning Board in previous hearings.

The public hearing was opened.

Mr. Kevin Sullivan, LPA Design, applicant, presented the plan approved on September 24 on the overhead screen. He described in detail the features and changes to the plans and the proposed circulation plan. He noted that their target retailers would not accept the land plan and the inconvenience for the user, both from an auto and pedestrian standpoint. He added that the plan would also decrease the parking capacity by 120-plus spaces.

Mr. Greg Moore, Vice President of Development, Catellus, noted that he led the leasing efforts at Alameda Landing. He noted that the first phase of that process was the leasing of the large format Building A users, and added that they had conducted numerous conversations with brokers representing large format tenants, as well as large format tenants themselves. They were able to discuss the plan approved by the Planning Board, as well as the concerns surrounding that plan. He noted that the retailer opinion was unanimous in their concern over this plan; they did not see the plan as being workable for any of the large format users. He cited opinions by a commercial broker, stating their belief that this plan created a barrier between the retailer and the customer, and that the drive aisle would be an

impediment to the shopping experience. He added that this kind of factor was important in the site being evaluated by the major retailers, which has become very competitive recently. He noted that most customers would arrive by car, and that the retailers were cognizant of that fact.

Mr. Steve Kendrick, LPA, described the main drive aisle in front of Building A and noted that it would be important to take some of the north-south pressure off of the drive aisle behind the Fifth Street retail area. He displayed the analysis of opening up one of the bays in the center to take some of the traffic off the drive aisle onto the parking field. He believed the proposed layout would be detrimental to the retail environment in the center.

Mr. Sullivan described the compromise plan, which they believed addressed the Planning Board's concerns heard on September 24, and which they believed would work well for the retailers, the site, the users of the site, and would accomplish the Planning Board's goals of having a pedestrian-friendly streetlike feeling within the center. He noted that they understood the Planning Board's concerns clearly, particularly with respect to wanting sidewalks on the west side. He believed that the sidewalk can be accomplished on the west side of the north-south street, and noted that was not the issue with the design team. He noted that the issue was blocking off the parking pods. He noted that landscaping had been added for a tree-lined feel as a pedestrian would walk the circulation patterns. He noted that they wanted to enhance the pedestrian movement along the north-south street at the storefronts. He added that they incorporated Member Cunningham's suggestion about enhancing the experience by widening the circulation along the front of the large format retail. He noted that they also straightened out some of the kinks in the circulation patterns, and that straight 90-degree angles replaced the kinks. They also increased the circulation along the east sides of all of the Fifth Street retail sites. He believed they accomplished all of the goals requested by the Planning Board. They felt strongly that the drive aisles must stay open for the convenient circulation to and from the large format. He noted that it would be difficult to maintain the landscaping along the parkways when they block the circulation to the storefronts.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

Ms. Kim Nicholls, P.O. 1105, expressed concern about conflicts between commercial and residential developments.

President Cook noted that for future purposes, she would be able to discuss general issues during Oral Communications.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that she had contacted Mr. Thomas about meeting with the applicant in order to explore a compromise, using the applicant's compromise plan as a starting point. She noted that her issues with Catellus's compromise plan were that there was no raised sidewalk or standard curbs, and that the number of curb cuts along the north-south driveway had not been reduced. She believed they were trying to maximize the amount of

parking on the site, and to use a standard approach towards shopping centers, which was different than what the Planning Board was trying to achieve.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that she still had issues with the 26 spaces that would be backing out directly into the aisles. She was uncomfortable with Catellus's compromise position, and would like to see something in between the Planning Board's and the applicant's proposal. She noted that the standard parking requirements for a shopping center of this size, which indicated that 3.6 spaces per thousand was reasonable for a weekday, and 4 spaces per thousand for a weekend. She believed that if the curb cuts were reduced, that requirement could be met. She noted that there were parking lots all over the country that require people to circulate on-site, and did not find that to be a compelling argument.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that she perceived Catellus's presentation of the compromise plan to City Council as an "end run" around the Planning Board, and was surprised to find that it was staff initiated. She inquired whether the Planning Board was intended to look at the compromise plan.

Mr. Thomas described the background of the compromise plan. He noted that the City Council was also informed that it could remand the item back to the Planning Board.

Member Lynch noted that he was somewhat disturbed by the comments, and believed the Planning Department acted correctly. He did not see any procedural issues, and did not believe they had done an "end run" around the Planning Board. He noted it was the department's responsibility to bring a project to a governing body so that they may make a determination in upholding the Planning Board's decision, remanding it back to the Planning Board, or in creating another plan.

Member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that letters dated October 23 and November 2 had been distributed to the Planning Board during the meeting, and added that she would have liked to have received them sooner. She recalled the recent status update of Alameda Towne Centre, and that their general manager asked the Planning Board to allow them to reduce the parking ratio. She believed that was a good idea, and would be more in keeping with current environmental concerns. She wanted quality retail to come to Alameda, and was also concerned about the local air quality because of high levels of particulate matter in the air on Spare the Air days. She agreed with the goal to make the center pedestrian-friendly, and did not believe the traditional parking ratio needed to apply in this case. She noted that the Planning Board concurred that the applicant's plan, which she saw as a strip of retail surrounded by a sea of parking, was not what they wanted for Alameda. She would like to see a shared parking concept, and a lower parking space to retail square footage ratio.

Member McNamara noted that she had hoped that a similar solution to reduce some of the current cutouts could be included in the compromise plan. She had similar concerns and issues with the applicant's arguments regarding the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment. She believed that the retail brokers were exerting pressure on the applicant to have more of a car-oriented center. She was concerned about pedestrian safety throughout the entire center, and assumed that there would be a raised curb cutout on the sidewalk with

the 20-foot-wide sidewalk in front of the large format. Mr. Sullivan confirmed that would occur, and that access ramps would be included where the crosswalks were located. He added that the sidewalks would be at the asphalt level, and the planters would be raised adjacent to them.

Member McNamara inquired why that plan would be more challenging from a car perspective than all the current cutouts included in the plan. Mr. Sullivan replied that any vehicle circulating in this parking lot must decide whether to keep circulating in the parking lot looking for a space, or to leave the parking field. He displayed the circulation plan and a discussion of driving and pedestrian circulation options ensued. He noted that from the retailers' point of view, a compromise must be reached between the cars and the pedestrians. He added that the retailers like 4.5 spaces per 1000, and that they were already pushing the limits. He noted that the goal of the plan was to make finding parking space easier for the shopper. They hoped that people parked once and circulated on foot, and he emphasized that they needed to create the safest possible environment for pedestrians.

Member Lynch believed the Planning Board and the applicants had a difference of opinion about the retail environment. He noted that they were trying to mix different types of shopping styles, and wished to commend the Planning Department and the applicant for returning with a compromise plan. He believed that while the compromise plan was not perfect, it was better than the previous plan.

Member Mariani noted that she shared the concerns previously expressed, and that she concurred with Member Lynch's comments.

Member Cunningham inquired about the primary points of access to the site. Mr. Sullivan replied that the major points of access were off of Fifth, and displayed the three intersections. He added that secondary points of access were off of Mitchell, as well as Stargell.

Member Cunningham expressed concerns about the traffic movement off the west road along Blocks B, C and D, and that the width of road going into the parking stalls were the same width as featured in the compromise plan. He believed that was a safety issue, and believed that the 90-degree parking along the faces of D, E and F could be a potential problem. He did not believe the users of the handicapped stalls would be able to get out easily with the traffic flows. He would wholeheartedly support the compromise plan, and that having open islands at the end would work well. He suggested using the solution for that quadrant in the approved plan of September 24th, which would have a net loss of 52 spaces and featured an enhanced pedestrian configuration. Mr. Sullivan believed that could be achieved with a loss of only 26 spaces.

Member Cunningham inquired about the stated flexibility within the agreement for the Department to allow a variation of 20% of floor area. He inquired what would trigger a return to the Planning Board. Mr. Thomas replied that the discussion of parking in the original Master Plan called for a minimum of 5:1000, followed by months of extensive discussion and negotiation. The discussion of parking then became a discussion of

maximums, not minimums. The Master Plan now states that with shared parking for multiple uses, the maximum shall be 4.5 spaces per thousand square feet of commercial space including restaurants. He noted that minor adjustments to building footprints of less than 10% can be approved at the staff level. If the Board wished to lower the parking ratio by increasing the square footage in that area of the retail center, that would not trigger any parking problems for staff. He added that a Master Plan Amendment would allow other changes to be made.

President Cook expressed concern about all the entrances into the parking field that will conflict with a strong east-west drive. She noted that the September plan did not include the access into the east-west roadway. She inquired whether the parking field serving Building B could be retained from the September plan. She added that the compromise plan had many more parking spaces and fewer trees. She liked the more heavily landscaped plans.

Mr. Aidan Berry, Catellus Development Group, preferred to hear all the comments from the Planning Board, and requested a break to meet with the team to address the consolidated comments.

President Cook noted that she liked the widened sidewalk in front of Building A. She inquired whether there were porticos that reach out in that area, or whether it was a free and clear walkway. She would like to see the walkway at Building B to act as a public walkway, and not part of the retail area. She liked the squared-off crossings in the compromise plan. She was not convinced that anyone would use the crosswalks at Building A, unless they came from Fifth Street. She believed the project had a split personality, because the Planning Board stated that it wanted a traditional, grid-pattern, neighborhood-oriented project, and that many compromises had been made. She believed that a considerable number of compromises had been made outside of the realm of the Planning Board. She did not believe it was a true mixed use project, and found it annoying at the Master Plan level that when there was buy-in for a mixed use project, that a suburban retail shopping center was the result.

President Cook stated that this item would be suspended while the applicants conferred outside of chambers, and that the remainder of the agenda would be addressed.

Member Cunningham moved to continue this item until after the remainder of the agenda has been heard.

Member Ezzy Ashcraft seconded the motion, with the following voice vote – 7. The motion passed.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Thomas noted that when the Planning Board approved 626 Buena Vista Avenue, they requested notification of volunteer opportunities such as Habitat for Humanity. Member Lynch noted that had been received by the Board.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

- a. Oral Status Report regarding the Alameda Point Advisory Task Force (Board Members Cook/Kohlstrand)

President Cook noted that there had been no further meetings.

Mr. Thomas advised that the next meeting would be held December 13, 2007, at the O Club. He noted that practical multiple scenarios would be presented.

- b. Oral Status Report regarding the Oakland/Chinatown Advisory Committee (Board Member Mariani).

Member Mariani noted that the November meeting had been cancelled. She added that during the October meeting, there had been some discussion about the focus of the Committee, and whether it should address Chinatown alone, or Chinatown and the extended surrounding areas.

Mr. Thomas noted that the City of Alameda had taken the lead for seven years on attempting to get the County and Oakland to examine different scenarios on improving the connection between the Webster and Posey Tubes, and the I-880 freeway. He noted that the area was built-up, and that a 2000 study concluded that there was no good solution. He displayed and described the proposed transition from the Tube to I-880 and to Fifth Street. He noted that traffic and speed control issues had been discussed.

Member Lynch inquired how many doors and roofs the City of Oakland had approved in the last 10 to 15 years, and how many were currently working their way through the City of Oakland's Planning Department. He would not want to allocate or spend any more funds on further studies on this particular issue. He believed the issue was being talked around, and that the core of the issue was not being addressed; he believed that was a waste of public funds.

Mr. Thomas suggested that this item be agendaized.

He recalled the origins of the traffic study in the Oakland Chinatown area, and noted that because the 880 freeway was constrained other options such as pedestrian and transit must be studied. He believed it was important to bring in other regions to the study as well.

- b. Oral Status Report regarding the Transportation subcommittee (Vice President Kohlstrand).

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that a meeting for the Pedestrian Task Force had been held two weeks earlier, and added that Gail Payne, who joined the City as the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, presented her first draft to the subcommittee. She identified the missing links in the pedestrian network, and would establish a criteria system to make an

evaluation to invest future funds. Potential funding sources would also be identified. The plan would come back to the Planning Board for review.

c.. Oral Status Report regarding the Alameda Climate Protection Task Force (Board Member Cunningham).

Member Cunningham noted that the next meeting would be held on December 19, 2007, and that they would review the contents of the report at that time.

President Cook invited a motion to reopen Oral Communications.

Member Ezzy Ashcraft moved to reopen Oral Communications.

Member Cunningham seconded the motion, with the following voice vote – 7. The motion passed.

Ms. Kim Nicholls, P.O. 1105, expressed concern about care for the environment within developments, as well as the use of office spaces and housing developments. She expressed concern about partial or total vacancies in buildings. She urged consistency in housing standards that were independent of personality.

President Cook reopened item 9-A. **DP07-0003 – Alameda Landing Mixed Use Development Project – Applicant: Catellus Development Group, a ProLogic Company.**

Mr. Kevin Sullivan, LPA Design, applicant, described the consensus plan the team had arrived at while the meeting had continued.

In response to an inquiry by President Cook whether they considered closing the other entries to the parking field in front of Building B, Mr. Sullivan replied that they did, which would require another 32 spaces of additional drop; they were able to reduce the parking by 26 with this reconfiguration, but could not create the separate drive aisle. He pointed out the connection that had been created, which created circulation on either side.

Member Lynch moved to accept the consensus plan and direct the Planning Department to incorporate the new language into the resolutions, referencing the compromise plans, including the latest changes seen in this document.

Member Cunningham seconded the motion, with the following voice vote – 3. Noes – 4 (Cook, Kohlstrand, Mariani, McNamara). The motion failed.

Member Ezzy Ashcraft suggested discussing the remaining deficiencies.

President Cook stated that she would like to see the east/west sidewalk as featured in the September plan.

